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STATE FOR NEA/MAG,
PLEASE PASS TO SENATOR LUGAR
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SUBJECT: SENATOR LUGAR'S MEETING WITH QADHAFI AUGUST 20

CLASSIFIED BY: Gregory L. Berry, COM, USLO, Tripoli.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In a conversation with Senator Lugar on August 20, Colonel Qadhafi complained that Libya had not been properly recognized and rewarded for its decisions on WMD. He suggested that the most appropriate "rewards" would be defensive weapons to protect the country against the threat of emerging extremist regimes in its neighbors, and the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Qadhafi insisted that the greatest threat to the region came from religious extremism, which he regarded as inextricably linked to the Saudi regime.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C). Senator Richard Lugar, accompanied by NEA PDAS Gordon Gray, NSC Director Tim Pounds, Chief of Staff Ken Myers, Jr and professional staff members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Daniel Diller and Michael Phelan, traveled to Sirte on August 20 to meet with Libyan leader Qadhafi. USLO COM and Acting DCM escorted the delegation to Sirte. Qadhafi, swathed in an embroidered robe with a matching cap, greeted the entire delegation in his desert encampment at midday. Qadhafi's advisors said they had taken him from a day of rest and fasting to accommodate the delegation's tight schedule. Given the intense noontime heat, Qadhafi's advisors arranged for a water truck to spray cooling mist in the immediate area in an attempt to lower the temperature. Qadhafi, initially distracted and swatting the air with his favorite prop, a branch of desert scrub brush, opened up the meeting by saying that the delegation's time in Libya was too short and the timing was difficult. Senator Lugar expressed appreciation for the Libyans' hospitality and said he hoped the countries would normalize relations. Lugar said he wanted to learn more about how to move the relationship forward. Lugar told Qadhafi that the U.S. appreciated Libya's decision to give up its WMD and noted its concern about the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. Lugar hoped that there would be more visitors to Libya, including student exchanges and scientific cooperation, particularly in the energy sector. Lugar expressed his concern about human rights, especially the Bulgarian and Palestinian medics and Fathi al-Jahmi.

¶3. (C) Qadhafi became more engaged as Senator Lugar thanked him for receiving members of Congress as part of the expanding bilateral relationship. Qadhafi replied that Libya's objective was improved relations. It was not Libya's wish for confrontation caused by a lack of communication. As a small, developing nation, Libya had no interest in hostilities with superpowers. Qadhafi made a case that the former hostility between the U.S. and Libya was perhaps due to occasional misunderstandings because of the circumstances of the Cold War and East/West blocs. He said that some parties had an interest in creating problems between the U.S. and Libya, but that now the enemies of yesterday are friends, noting, "Egypt is now a friend of the U.S., that is a big change in the region." Qadhafi also described the Palestinian/Israeli dialogue as a hopeful sign. Qadhafi said he wanted to avoid mistakes and a relapse in the relationship. "No one benefited from confrontation in the past; everyone lost." He continued, "we

need to change our policies for mutual benefit."

14. (C) "Libya's steps are a service to world peace," said Qadhafi, as he moved deeper into his opening monologue. Qadhafi took credit for helping Bush and Blair win reelection and said Libya wanted to help the U.S. and the UK out of conviction and principle. Libya's assessment was that it didn't benefit from having a nuclear bomb, so it decided to abandon its programs. Qadhafi also claimed Libya was told it would be rewarded by Blair and Bush for its decision, but "Libya has not been rewarded." He said that Libya was urging North Korea and Iran to give up their WMD programs, but "they say Libya's experience is a bad example, and this is true." According to Qadhafi, the Libyans are disappointed that more rewards have not materialized; "the idea of shifting from military to peaceful use is made insignificant." Qadhafi said the U.S. should seriously reconsider its response.

15. (C) Qadhafi emphasized that Libya needs to guarantee its self protection. Libya was not asking for offensive, but rather defensive equipment in accordance with international law: "Libya has a right and a need to protect itself." He continued, "we were promised the U.S. would help, but there has been no action." The world needed to see that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were more beneficial than military uses; it needed to see the direct impact on economic development for Libya. "We expected Japan, China, the UK and U.S. would reward Libya; we are sorry that we have been ignored; we are looking for reward from the whole world." Qadhafi reiterated that Libya took an unprecedented step to end its WMD program, a historic decision in service of world peace and security. Instead of being rewarded, Libya was attacked by the Muslim and Arab politicians and press. Libya was "called foolish for surrendering its power and advantage without any compensation," he said.

16. (C) Lugar responded that the U.S. worked to renew the relationship in stages; it recognized and appreciated the Libyan steps. Business opportunities and tourism had expanded for Libya and it was possible to cooperate on mutual defense. Lugar said, "we respect and want to enhance Libya's security; we understand your feelings and want to change the status quo to get Libya off the State Sponsors of Terrorism List." Lugar emphasized that with cooperation and a couple of key decisions, the U.S. believed removal from the list was close at hand. He also explained that when Qadhafi and Bush agreed to normalize the bilateral relationship, both the Senate and the U.S. citizens, would review President Bush's decision and Lugar hoped to hold a constructive and successful debate that would confirm the normalization. "Libya has other friends thanks to your reception of other congressmen," Lugar said. "It is an important moment for us; we want to have all the good news possible," he continued. While the friends of Libya want to advance the relationship, Lugar said, "we need help with visas for official visitors and the business community." He also pointed out the importance of prompt issuance of Libyan visas for teachers at the American school. Lugar offered "words of assurance that we are moving toward the finish line," and expressed gratitude for all the information shared by the Libyan officials who had met with the delegation.

17. (C) At that point of the discussion, Qadhafi decided to move into a private session with Senator Lugar and COM. In the smaller meeting, Qadhafi repeated his refrain that Libya had not been rewarded for giving up its WMD, acknowledging that some benefits had accrued, but "not what is requested; Libya is patiently waiting." He characterized student exchange, an American school and business activities in Libya as "welcome, but as good for the U.S. as for Libya." Senator Lugar asked Qadhafi what he specifically had in mind. After some byplay, Qadhafi focused on two points as appropriate "rewards." First, he wanted Libya to be able to defend itself with defensive weapons if, as he fears, extremist elements should take control in Algeria, Tunis, Egypt or Sudan (the world is "living on a volcano," with the risk of extremist explosions in many countries). Second, Qadhafi wanted to demonstrate the potential benefits of nuclear technology, as in desalination programs. He needed something to prove to the Libyan people

that the world recognized the wisdom of Libya's decision on WMD.

18. (S) Turning then to the threat of terrorism, Qadhafi plunged into his now-familiar analysis of Wahhabism, which he sees as inextricably linked to the Saudi regime, and the dangers it poses for the region. The U.S. mistakenly has dismissed his concerns about the Saudis as nothing more than the result of a sour Libyan-Saudi bilateral relationship, Qadhafi said. In fact, his analysis has nothing to do with the personal disagreement between him and then-Crown Prince Abdullah. The fact is that, if the world wants to destroy terrorism root and branch, it must remove the base of terrorist activity and ideology by opposing Wahhabism. "A Libyan goes to the hajj and becomes indoctrinated," he said -- "thousands are being indoctrinated." The U.S. will pay a heavy price for its continued support for Saudi Arabia. The longer the present Saudi regime remains in power, the more likely it is to be replaced by religious extremists. (In passing, Qadhafi argued that a strong secular regime in Syria would continue to resist extremists inspired by Usama bin Laden, and the U.S. should adjust its policy toward Syria accordingly.) He stressed that he strongly opposed the use of force to change the regime in Saudi Arabia; instead, the U.S. should change its political position to support dedicated Saudi reformers. If we actively support "the Saudi people's right to self-determination," we would see the kingdom peacefully dissolve into its constituent provinces -- "the same thing that happened with the USSR." When Lugar asked skeptically how a moderate group would come to power if Saudi Arabia underwent a political transformation, Qadhafi insisted that it would be a natural process -- "the peoples would break off by themselves."

19. (C) Senator Lugar brought the conversation back to ongoing U.S.-Libyan cooperation on counterterrorism and non-proliferation, saying that we need to work together and need to be thoughtful about the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Qadhafi said that he would rely on the Senator to relay his message, but would also like to meet directly with President Bush. "Libya is still waiting," he said, for the promised benefits from its December 2003 decisions. He added that he would also like to talk with the President about Africa and "the new colonialism from the East" (i.e., growing Chinese and Indian influence in Africa). Qadhafi also suggested that Secretary Rice should visit Libya: "When she comes to the area but does not stop in Libya, people may say there's a boycott." At the close of the meeting, the Lugar delegation flew back to Tripoli and met with other senior Libyan officials (reported septel).

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